

Marriage Counseling Not Your Last Step!

While most married couples experience occasional disagreements and rough patches, the majority view marriage counseling as a last resort before divorce, when in fact they should see counseling as an early learning tool to help make things better. Emotional abandonment and emotional neglect are two of the most driving factors for the dissolution of a marriage. Spouses often seek counseling when they feel misunderstood, isolated, lonely, frustrated, or deeply hurt. Others may seek counseling when they feel a profound sense of sadness in their relationships. These feelings may not be new; they may have been brewing for years. Couples entering counseling earlier stand a better chance of saving their marriages. Talk to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to learn more.



EAPs: Above and Beyond

If you think that the EAP only helps employees with mental health or substance abuse problems, think again. EAPs improve productivity by helping employees whose personal concerns affect their job performance. Also, EAPs do a lot more than simply acting as sounding boards. Think about the EAP when you need confidential help with job and career concerns, health resources, financial concerns, eldercare matters, workplace-adjustment challenges, workplace-relationship issues, or finding helpful resources in the community. If in doubt about whether the EAP can help with an issue or concern, be sure to ask.



Relationship Rainbows



To maximize the value of relationships, be sure to include the following in your life: 1) **life-skill mentors**—people whose life experiences have brought them wisdom that they can share with you to enhance your life, 2) **role models**—people whose achievements match your own dreams and aspirations, 3) **friends**—people you bond with through affection and mutual high regard, 4) **supporters**—caring people who will support you through life's difficult experiences, and 5) **peers**—people with standing equal to yours who recognize your achievements and encourage your success. Are any colors missing from your rainbow?

Give Your Attitude a Twist



Do you take on more assignments, work longer hours, have better ideas, or possess more problem-solving knowledge than most? If so, do you also know the secret to staying positive, especially if your pay is no higher than that of your peers, and leaving is simply not in the cards? Outstanding employees react in various ways to this classic workload inequity stressor, but those who maintain a positive outlook say they focus on what goes right at work rather than experiencing resentment. Their approach involves focusing on the agreeable aspects of their jobs and using affirmative thinking strategies until they become second nature. "Let gratitude be your attitude" might be the most important stress management tool of all.

Should You Become a Manager?

Ask yourself the following questions, and if the answer to most of them is "yes," think about applying for a position on the next rung up the ladder. First and foremost, are you motivated to achieve? Do you feel a need for accomplishment demonstrated by your ability to take the initiative? Second, do you have good social skills? Working well with different types of personalities depends upon diplomacy, tact, and a talent for successful interpersonal relationships. If you enjoy a variety of relationships, chances are you have the ability to **influence** others, **nurture** their abilities, and **lead** them where you want them to go. Third, do you communicate well? Good managers instinctively know what to say, as well as how to say it, and when to say it. They keep their bosses **informed** on key issues so that he or she can adequately explain events to those even higher up in the chain of command. Finally, have you got what it takes to respond to the needs of the job after hours—weekend e-mails, cell phone calls, unpredictable overtime, work-related thoughts in the shower, dinner-hour interruptions, and perhaps even while on vacation? Should you become a manager? If you answered "yes," to these questions, throw in the ability and willingness to learn about managing data and personnel issues and you may be ready for life in today's thrifter, faster, and more demanding world of management.



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Spring Clean Your Office



Do dust bunnies peek out from behind your desktop PC? Perhaps it's time to spring clean your work space. Fight the inertia of chronic procrastination: set a specific time to attack the mess. Switch from "pack-rat mode" to "purge-and-toss mode." Don't get mad; get even with the clutter that's taken over your life! Tackle one small area on your desk at a time so you don't feel overwhelmed, and finish that area completely before moving on to the next. Alternatively, stack everything in one neat pile and work your way through it. Zap the dust and clean hard-to-reach areas. Disarray can interfere with your productivity, affect your mental health, and even contribute to a reputation you don't want. Maintenance strategy: tidy up at the end of each day so that you can begin every morning with a clean, organized work space and good feelings that come with it as you step through the door.

When You're Injured and Out on Leave



If you have been injured at work, how eager are you to return to your job after taking time off? Often, it depends less on how you feel physically than on how you feel about your job. Do you have an ongoing conflict with your supervisor or a coworker? Does your job make you feel anxious or unhappy? If the idea of going back to work upsets you, you may be subconsciously delaying your recovery. Focus on both your physical recovery and your emotional well-being when you have been injured at work. If you feel that your recovery is not progressing as it should, consider evaluating your pre-injury work environment. Seek advice from an EAP about these issues. You may need to make changes upon your return that will help you feel more enthusiastic about your job.

Become a Self-Starter



If you are a self-starter, your organization knows it. They rely on you to motivate yourself, and to accomplish objectives and goals in line with their mission and objectives. Supervisors put less pressure on you because they know you as a creative person who stays focused. As a trusted employee, you require little supervision. To become a self-starter, decide what you want to accomplish. Make it magnificent, and it will motivate you. Always define what you wish to achieve so that as you complete one goal, another takes its place. Continually assess your progress. Make commitments that force you to stay on task and deliver on your promises. Avoid procrastination and distraction, the greatest obstacles to acquiring a reputation as a self-starter.